CHAPTER THREE

In Perspectives: Discussion on Reports of the Commissioner and National Commission for SC/STs

- Perspectives on the Implementation of Policies and Programmes
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The policy of protective discrimination primarily functions as an instrument of social justice and subsequently as social transformation. Social transformation is not considered to be a natural phenomenon but the result of a rise of political consciousness among the people that results in various interventionist measures taken to fight for the improvement of their social condition. The idea behind such efforts need not necessarily mean a radical change but a slow evolutionary process, since no social system changes completely and even the most radical changes like revolutions never bring changes in all features of a social structure. Hence all social changes remain uneven and partial (Cohen 1979:3). When we talk of the policy of protective discrimination it encompasses the idea of planning not merely from within the ambit of social consciousness but an enforcement of the State in the form of social legislations. The State institutions like administrative apparatus, political executive, courts and above all legislatures are major instruments of social legislations.

In this study, an attempt has been made to look into the role of legislature i.e., the Lok Sabha in the formulation of legislations for the SC/STs.

As stated earlier, the Lok Sabha provides an ample opportunity to its Members to participate in governmental affairs on two occasions: (1) by oral or written questions, and (2) by participating in debates on Bills, Resolutions and Statements made by the government on the floor of the House. These two occasions can also be understood in terms of the direct and indirect influence on the decisions of the government. The Questions are the indirect influence building measure with the parliamentarians, which indicate a preparatory phase of influencing the decision-making process (Narayana 1980:433). Direct influence is exercised during the debate and discussion on various proposals of the government, viz., Bills, Resolutions etc.

Although the Reports of the CSCT and the Commission fall in the latter category, here too the Members do not exercise a direct influence on the decisions of the government. The reply of the concerned Minister is indicative more of the policies in existence than about the formulation of new policies. In majority of the cases the government assures the House to come out with new proposals in the near future. Thus it is basically during the discussion on the Bills where MPs influence the decision-making process directly. But here we are concerned with the Reports of CSCT and the Commission only. The discussion on the Reports basically develops a
institution which prepares these Reports. Under article 338 (3) it has been clearly mentioned that this body would investigate all the matters relating to the safeguards of the SC/STs under the Constitution. There is no other comparable authority which has been bestowed upon with this sort of powers and asked to prepare a report on the functioning of the welfare measures for this section. Also, its review of the conditions prevailing at various levels gains importance in the context of developing/modifying or changing the policies in favour of the SC/STs.

In 1985, the 3rd and the 4th reports of Commission for 1980-81 and 1981-82 were discussed. Whereas the 28th and 29th reports of the erstwhile CSCT for 1986-87 and 1987-88, and the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th reports of the erstwhile Commission for 1982-86, were debated in 1994. The newly constituted NCSCT's reports from 1992 onwards were not deliberated upon till 1995 by the Lok Sabha.

Several studies on the leadership in Parliament have observed that this leadership being elite in nature remains alienated from the large mass of citizens and therefore is unable to represent the interests of citizens as a policy making institution. Guttmann's study (1964) on British parliamentary elite over a period of hundred years showed that the occupation and education of the MPs show them coming from a socially privileged class. This makes them more anxious towards maintaining the social structure. They support their own privileges from the system and thus control over the economic resources of a community through political influence. The fact that they show little interest in making policies for the under-privileged sections is also an observation of the study. Studies on Indian legislators by Mathur et al., (1993), also observe a lack of concern among them for the development of large mass of people. Their constitutional concerns do not reflect upon long-term perspectives but the only demand for major chunk of central assistance. There is a poor representation of demands and needs of the drought affected people before the Government on the floor of the House by the legislators. In the final analysis it says that "legislative interventions on drought reveals the MP as substantially committed neither to his constituents nor to the national interest, much less to the lofty abstractions such as reason and conscience... Parliament as a whole has a fairly limited influence on policy-making. Which remains the exclusive preserve of the Government..... (p116).

These studies show the ineffectiveness of Parliament to hold the executive responsible for providing developmental direction to the policies formulated by the
regime in power. It is equally true that policy issues being complex and technical in nature cannot be easily comprehended by the ordinary MPs. The studies on electronics and science and technology policies undertaken in 1985 by R.B. Jain and Rahman and Haritash respectively, also point towards this.

There could be arguments in favour of a lack of concern among the MPs on electronics or science and technology policies as they need technical and scientific understanding. But such negligence on simple issues such as poverty alleviation, atrocities etc., need relatively simple and ordinary understanding on the part of the legislators, and they cannot be defended on the same grounds. The consequences of poverty, untouchability, atrocities etc. have a long term effects on Dalits and we expect that the concern of the MPs particularly of Dalit MPs would find proper articulation.

Democratic representation expects accountability from representatives and it becomes quite obvious when special interests are distinctly represented in it, as is the case of Dalits in India.

Emancipatory politics requires the genuine concern of the representatives, not merely for the power and prestige in serving constituencies but to recur adequate representation of its political acumen and adequate protection of Dalit interests. It also includes competing for capturing political power within the party as well as in the legislature (Duskin 1972:208, 210-211). Only vocal and well-informed MP can force the treasury benches to be responsive and accountable towards the plight of Dalits and make his/her presence felt. An entry into the legislature is no assurance to become a ruling force. It is equally necessary to capture economic, ideological and cultural power to demolish the dominance of the ruling class maintained in such power centres (Guru 1993:45).

It has been rightly pointed out that the law-making process for the welfare of Dalits has been very slow, though the major problems confronted by them have been identified for long (Narayana 1980:440). Here the emphasis is on the perspective being adopted and developed in the Lok Sabha with regard to the Reports of the Commission and the CSCT by the Members in the House.

The reports of the CSCT and Commission for SC/STs provide framework for the legislators to emphatically argue in favour of formulating policies of a specific nature for them.
These recommendations function as policy inputs for the legislators to make policy decisions and legislature functions as a "demand input processor", to use Wahlke's (1978) phrase. Also the policy inputs contained in the reports of the NCSCT help legislators to develop their perspectives for policy demands is the concern of present chapter. The relationship between the reports of NCSCT and the perspectives adopted by legislators on the floor of the house would help us to examine their responses vis-à-vis the feedback provided and would subsequently ascertain our knowledge of the gaps, therein. The average citizen, both as spectator and as voter does not know much about the issues to mount the policy demands that could be raised by the institutional apparatus like NCSCT. Apart from citizens or constituents, political parties, pressure groups, cabinet colleagues etc. can also put demands on the government that become policy input mechanism for the legislature. But these are extra-legislative and extra-constitutional, whereas the NCSCT Report being constitutional in nature remains to be a prime policy input mechanism for the legislators. These reports may be utilized during the legislative deliberations and we examine how far the reports are used to develop policy perspectives. Floor debates have been considered the most important form of deliberation and the extent of floor deliberation become adequate deliberativeness of the legislature (Gerald Solomon and Donald Wolfenbergos 1994). Being confronted with the shortage of time and resources on the one hand and the need to take too many decisions on the other, legislators are not in a position to deliberate upon each and every issue. So they need to be specific. The NCSCT reports make it easier for them to obtain information relevant to their needs during deliberations.

There are two perspectives to assess the responsiveness of the legislators. One which satisfy the immediate demands of the people. The other which creates new demands according to the circumstances and needs in the long-term perspective. Thus representation can be divided into two categories: 1) Phenomenal Representation, and 2) Enduring Representation. The former has short-term objectives, where increasing funds for welfare activities, vacancies for recruitment, scholarships for education, etc. became the concerns for the representative with regard to Dalits. And the representative may ask to implement the present schemes and programmes without suggesting changes in their implementation mechanism. The latter is concerned with long-term objectives where an attempt is made not only to strengthen existing institutional mechanisms but also to create new ones to
implement policies. It also terms the present Dalit policy paradigm as inadequate, demanding additional attention, and offering alternatives to policies.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the legislator to influence Dalit policy would substantially depend on the perspectives adopted, even though legislative deliberations may not be conscious articulations with one or the other of these perspectives. The NCSCT reports also deal with both short-term and long-term objectives. The legislative deliberations also explicitly or implicitly refer to one of these perspectives only.

While participating in a debate on the reports, a stage can be set by the legislators to take the Government to task on the conditions of Dalits'. Being equipped with statistics and recommendations of the NCSCT, Dalit legislators in particular are expected to be more serious to use the occasion for the improvement of the Dalit a lot.

An examination of the discussion on the two motions that took place in the Lok Sabha in 1985 and 1994 on the Commission and the CSCT's and reports shows prevalence of both Phenomenal and Enduring representation among the legislators. These reports are based not only on the facts and figures on the Dalit Policy paradigm but also recommend the Government to take steps both in terms of proper policy implementation and policy shifts.

Though most of the times legislators during the discussion were involved in policy issues and they also raised minor issues which reflected on phenomenal representation. Out of seventy-three legislators who spoke on the two Motions, seventeen MPs apart from raising policy issues deliberated on: (i) inadequate and untimely scholarships to the Dalit students (ii) fulfilling or increasing vacancies in various central government departments; and (iii) demanding more funds for welfare activities. Eleven of these MPs belonged to reserved constituencies.

For instance:
Anadi Charan Das [Jajpur]:

The stipend you are giving under educational facilities is totally inadequate. It is not sufficient to continue the studies. Therefore, the amount of stipend should be increased so that our children are benefited by these stipends. Similarly, under the women education programme also very little amount has been made available. More funds should be allocated for this purpose also (LSD 26 November 1985:313).
R.P. Suman [Akbarpur]:

Even 38 years after independence, the representation which should have been up to 22.5 per cent has reached only 5.68 per cent. With this speed it would possibly take a hundred, two hundred or four hundred years. Similarly, in 1982-83 in civil services, 963 candidates were selected. Of these, only 26 candidates belong to the backward classes. This is the state of affairs at present. We regret that we are not marching forward with the speed we had anticipated in starting these welfare programmes (LSD 28 November 1985:278).

Manikrao Hodlya Gavit [Nandurbar]:

There is a huge backlog in services under Central Government, State Governments and Public Sector Undertakings in every state, there is backlog in appointments of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Primary and Middle Schools and Colleges. The institutions working there even do not inform the concerned authorities regarding this backlog. The Welfare Ministry should look into the matter and this should also be brought to the notice of Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of the State (LSD 7 December 1994:248).

R. Annanambi [Pollachi]:

More funds should be allocated for these schemes. A sum of Rs. 6000 is not enough for constructing a house. A minimum of Rs. 10,000 should be given for a house. Similarly, instead of limiting 25 houses for a Block, at least 100 houses should be constructed in a Block. Naturally more funds should be allocated by the Centre for achieving this objective (LSD 28 November 1985:295).

The only major difference on the issue of phenomenal representation discussion that took place in the years 1985 and 1994 was that in the former the demand was to increase scholarships, vacancies in jobs and funds. But in the latter year it was meant for providing the scholarship in time, fulfilling the existing or increased reserved quota in jobs. Quite interestingly there was no demand to provide more funds for welfare activities in 1994.

Apart from the above aspects of Phenomenal representation there is a more concrete aspect which was the simple demand for the implementation of existing policies without asking for changes or strengthening the mechanisms responsible for their implementation.

The accountability of rulers is the cornerstone of democratic governance. “Democratic representation also provides for leadership responsibility in decision making by encouraging political leaders to pursue long-term national interests, in addition to reacting to the pressures of the moment” (Mathur et al. 1993:82).
A conscious and assertive electorate may force the representative to be articulative and responsive. Having got elected through joint electorates, the Dalit representative has to maintain a balance between the constituency needs and the needs of his/her Dalit constituents (Guru: 1986). Thus his/her representation functions at two levels – general and particular. Here, we are concerned with the particular context in which an SC/ST representative is expected to respond to the needs of the Dalit masses along with the non-Dalit representatives. For effective representation, participation is the primary condition for the representative. But participation requires a standard of articulation which can only come from the proper understanding of the problem. For this, the representative needs to be already well-informed about the conditions and expectations of the constituents. But to examine the question of political articulation two issues are involved – one signifies the character of representation, whereas the other, the content of representation. In this chapter, we deal with the latter aspect of representation.

Perspectives on Implementation of Policies and Programmes

The hostility for non-implementation of legislative measures and the common rules and regulations for Dalits was faced by Ambedkar during his encounters with the officialdom. Observing the attitude of personnels in implementation process he had stated:

The official is anti-untouchables (read Dalit) and pro-Hindu. Whenever he has any authority or discretion it is always exercised to the prejudice of the untouchables.... The police and Magistrate are sometimes corrupt. If they were only corrupt, things would not perhaps be so bad because an official would not perhaps be so had because an official who is corrupt is open to purchase either party. But the additional misfortune is that the police and Magistrate are often more partial than corrupt. It is this partiality to the Hindus and his antipathy to the untouchables which results in the denial of protection and justice to the untouchables. There is no cure to this partiality to the one and the antipathy to the other. It is founded in the social and religious repugnance which is inborn in every Hindu. The police and Magistrate by reason of their motives, interest and their breeding do not sympathize with the living forces operating among the untouchables. They are not charged with the wants, the pains, the cravings and the desires which actuate the untouchables. Consequently, they are openly hostile and inimical to their aspirations, do not help them to advance, disfavour their cause and snap at everything that smacks of pride and self-respect. On the other hand they share the feelings of the Hindus sympathize with them in the attempt to maintain their power, authority, prestige and their disunity over the untouchables. In any conflict between the two they act as the agents of the Hindus in suppressing their revolt of the untouchables and participate quite
openly and without shame in the nefarious attempt of all Hindus to do everything possible by all means, fair or foul, to “teach the untouchables a lesson” and hold down in their own place (BAWS 1989:269-70).

It is significant to note that among the 36 Members who participated in debate in 1985, only 6 of them found no major fault in the policies of the government but only flaws in the administrative apparatus. It needs to be noted that all of them belonged to the Congress party, among whom 4 were SC/STs (2 each) and other 2 were from general constituencies. All of them were equivocally concerned with misappropriation, under-utilisation of funds and non-implementation of the existing policies of the government. For instance:

Ram Payare Panika [Robertsganj]:

So far as the question of their (Dalits) economic, educational and social development is concerned, all the hon. Members have dealt at length about it, I would like to point out that all the policies of the Central Government are all right but the fault lies in their implementation at different levels. Due to lack of time-bound programme the desired results are not being achieved and the policies and guidelines are not being implemented properly (LSD 28 November 1985:353).

Satyanarayan Jatiya [Ujjain]:

Though we are considering protection of the rights which were made to strengthen the concept of equality. We aimed for such an objective but are we being able to achieve this objective. That is why, several programmes, tribal sub-plans, schemes for ensuring a special share of Scheduled Castes can definitely prove to be important towards development in the financial provisions for their development can be increased substantially but it is not being implemented and even if is being implemented at some places, it is not satisfactory. If their pace and functioning is made satisfactory, their outcome can also be satisfactory (LSD 8 December 1994:268).

Since 1950, many legislations have been enacted by various regimes for the upliftment of the marginalised sections. The Union and State Governments have also enacted Minimum Wages legislation. The non-implementation of basic monetary support system to the poor tells the whole story of the policy implementation in India (Mendelsohn and Vicziany 1998:54).

Though the Members in the 10th Lok Sabha were also concerned with the non-implementation of the policies but none of them uttered sweeping statements as was done in the 8th Lok Sabha. The policies were being correctly formulated but implementation was found to be highly unsatisfactory. The non-implementation aspect kept haunting the discussion during this debate as well. The non-implementation of polices make not only the development of this section materially
tough but the realisation of the objectives of liberty, equality, justice and fraternity set by the preamble of the constitution also becomes a Herculan task.

The demands for implementation have no meaning without asking for strengthening of the implementing agencies. It indicates a phenomenal representation but its nature differed during 1985 and 1994 because in the former, emphasis was on simple implementation of the existing policies, whereas in the latter, implementation was termed unsatisfactory and need was felt to alter mechanism of implementation.

Moreover, terming the implementation process unsatisfactory is not sufficient to force the Government make its enforcing agencies more capable. The nature of the Dalit problem is distinct and so it needs specific treatment in a long term perspective. It needs situation-sensitive strategies which have both a combative as well as a preventive orientation. The deliberations in the Lok Sabha are not necessarily conscious articulations with short-term or long-term perspectives. Having shown the prevalence of Phenomenal representations in the above discussion, we now turn to Enduring representation, where MPs not only showed dis-satisfaction with the implementation process but also referred towards the inadequacy of a few existing policies, inefficiency in some others and, argued for modifications and changes in those with regard to the empowerment of Dalits. We examine Enduring representation first in terms of strengthening implementing agencies and then in terms of policy shifts.

Constitutional development during the last fifty years has helped in finding ways not only with regard to alternative policies but also alternative mechanisms of implementing those polices. The recent debate on the President K.R. Narayan's remarks to judge "whether it is the constitution that has failed or we have failed the constitution" highlight the need to examine the implementation process and those who implement the policies. Arguing for changes, it has been said that "if some changes in the constitution can help reform those who implement it, then it should certainly be looked into"(Nayyar 2000:3742). These observations emphatically raise the need to look into the perspectives adopted by the legislators to strengthen the mechanisms of implementation of Dalit policies.
Perspectives on Monitoring Agencies-CSCT and Commission for SC/STs

Most of the participants in the debate referred to the weak status of the Commission for SC/STs and its inability to get the information from various ministries and departments, leaving aside the question of inquiry into the malpractices prevalent at different levels. Almost all the Members (apart from 6 mentioned earlier) consistently pursued the need to give more teeth to the Commission and strengthen it to function effectively in monitoring and for the development of these sections. Mere allocation of resources is not sufficient condition for development but it needs to be seen whether the allocated resources reaching to the people or not. To make possible for allocated safeguards to reach the masses was one of the most frequently emphasised demands among the legislators.

K. Jeevarathinam [Arakkonam]:

Unfortunately this Commission has not got the powers to enquire into the petitions submitted by the Scheduled Caste workers about their not getting minimum wages under the Act. This commission should be given powers under the Commission of Inquiry Act. Then only the Commission can look into these genuine grievances of these people and penalise those who deny them the minimum wages. I suggest that the hon. Minister of Social Welfare should do the needful in this matter, and ensure that the Scheduled Caste agricultural labourers get the minimum wages.

The issues relating to land ceilings and the updating of land records have been included in the new 20-Point Programme. Unless the State Governments pay serious attention to these two issues, the Scheduled Caste landless agricultural workers will not make any progress in their life. This commission has to remain the silent spectator if the State Governments do not implement recommendations made by the Commission in these two matters. And when this commission is given the constitutional status and when the Commission gets mandatory powers, then alone this Commission can function effectively. I request that the hon. Minister should expeditiously forward the constitutional Amendment Bill for empowering the Commission with mandatory powers (LSD 28 November 1985:290).

Thus during the debate on the Commission’s report in 1985 it was demanded that the Commission should be given the constitutional status. Subsequently an Act was passed in 1990 by the Parliament to provide constitutional status to the Commission for SC/STs. It was clubbed with the CSCT and was named as National Commission for SC/STs.

It was believed that the NCSCT would be able to monitor the functioning of the policies for SC/STs in an efficient manner, but the Members during the debate on the Reports of the CSCT in 1994 were apprehensive about the role played by it during the last 3 years of its existence. One of the participants went up to the extent of calling it a ‘toothless tiger’, but the Members by and large were more bothered
about improving the functioning of the National Commission than suggesting major policy shift in its institutional apparatus. For instance:

Manjay Lal [Samastipur]:

This Commission has been given wide powers. Out of these, 3 or 4 powers are very effective. The Commission has the powers to check atrocities on downtrodden, provide immediate relief to the sufferers and rehabilitate them. It is the duty of the Commission to see that the people belonging to Scheduled Castes get promotion in government services and they are not subjected to any mental torture. This Commission has also been empowered to oversee the works undertaken by the State Governments as well as the Union governments as well as the Union Government under different schemes meant for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This enjoys the powers to call for any document from any court and order an inquiry after examining the documents. Though this Commission enjoys, such wide powers, yet it does not have its own budget and the staff to oversee its functioning. In this way, the Commission depends on the Ministry of Welfare (LSD 24 August 1994:617).

Welfare Ministry As Nodal Agency

One significant aspect of the discussion was to constitute a separate Ministry for the welfare of SC/STs or at least to have a special minister for them. It was also observed that with this change the National Commission would also get strengthened and its reports could be implemented in a proper way. The special Minister and the National Commission could have co-ordination with the governments at the State and the UT level.

Dwarka Nath Das [Karimganj]:

Sir, in my opinion, there should be a Minister of State entirely for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Welfare Ministry because welfare is a very broad term to cover all aspects of the people of India. That is why there should be a particular Minister under the Ministry of Welfare. There should be a network of State and UT level Commissions under the supervision of the National Commission to look into the problems and to implement the national policies relating to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. I will suggest that after every five years there should be a detailed survey of SC and ST people to assess about their stages of development educationally, socially and economically (LSD 7 December 1994:237).

The Ministry of Welfare was denoted a nodal agency for overall policy, planning and co-ordination for the development of SC/STs in January 1982 after the amendments in the Allocation of Business Rules of 1961. Not only the Ministry of Welfare was made a nodal Ministry but also given the responsibility of co-ordination with the Central Ministries, State Governments and Union Territories. In spite of the amendment in the procedures, the Members aired their dis-satisfaction
and demanded the constitution of a separate ministry or if that was not possible, then a department for the section at least:

**Aman Roy Pradhan [Coochbehar]:**

Let there be a separate Department to deal with the SC/ST people of the country. But it is an unfortunate thing for us that a few days ago the Cabinet was reshuffled and a new Department has been created —Department of Welfare for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes though it was not mentioned. May I know who will deal with the atrocities part of it? Would you be able to deal with that job? Certainly not, It is with the Home Ministry itself. so, the problem of the SC and STs has been divided in many parts. Some parts will be dealt with by the Home Ministry, some by the Welfare Ministry and some by some other Ministry. In this way are you going to solve their problem (LSD 26 November 1985:319-20).

Though a separate department was created as the watchdog for the welfare of SC/STs, it remains to be analysed what role the separate department is to played monitoring the implementation of policies and programmes of the central government. A department without committed bureaucrats moves to be at the cutting edge in case of transfer of sincere incumbents. It happened to the Department of Rural Development in 1990's. It became handicapped in the absence of committed administrators due to their transfer to the Department of Finance that became the power-house of economic liberalisation (Mendelsohn and Vicziany 1998:166).

**Perspectives on Atrocities**

Atrocities on Dalits is the consistent feature of Indian Society in the context of the problem of untouchability. Most of the atrocities are committed in the rural areas. The prime reason for such atrocities relates to the land question in one form or the other. The Reports of the NCSCT have repeatedly attracted the attention of the government in this regard. Although the abolition of untouchability was given comprehensive treatment in Untouchability Offences Act (UOA) and later on in the protection of Civil Rights Act (PCRA) to 1978, the number of atrocities have seen no slump signs. The Reports of NCSCT have displayed that atrocities which are physical in nature are committed more in the rural than in urban areas and in most cases the reason is the landlessness of Dalits. Problem of landlessness is not only due to the absence of land among Dalits but has a few other dimensions like the lack of possession of land or if there is possession then, it's the problem of the evacuation or usurpation of land by the big landlords.
During the debate on the 1985 Report, thirteen out of twenty Members of atrocity prone areas (Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc.) touched the subject in one way or the other. They were not happy with the implementation of PCRA on the one hand and wanted a more stringent laws to punish the guilty on the other.

The following excerpt substantiate the perspective on atrocities in the Lok Sabha in this context:

R. P. Suman [Akbarpur]:

So far as atrocities on the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes are concerned, you will see that the number of such incidents have doubled during 1981-82. It has been stated in the report that the number of cases of atrocities increased by 112 per cent during 1982-83. Despite that, it is said that the number of such incidents is decreasing. I request the Government to take this matter seriously, otherwise their number will continue to increase. In order to prevent such incidents action should be taken on the basis of the recommendations made in this report (LSD 28 November 1985:279).

The continuation of this practice has also been confirmed by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In its review under the auspices of the convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination in 1996. The Committee states:

Although constitutional provisions and legal texts exist to abolish untouchability and to protect the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes... widespread discrimination against those people, and the relative impurity of those who abuse them, points to the limited effects of these measures... (Human Rights Watch 1999:26).

To constitute special courts to deal with the atrocities has been a long standing demand. More so, after looking into the cases of conviction, it shows a quite disturbing scenario that is emerging. In 1962 the conviction rate had declined to 23 percent as compared to 1951 and this has further compounded with lowering of conviction rate to 12 percent in 1982 (Mendelsohn and Vicziany 1998:128). Thus the politico-legal system dealing with atrocities allows the leeways offenders with mechanisms of self-defence and through which they get out of the administrative apparatus easily.

K.S. Rao [Machilipatam]:

When we hear that some offences are committed against them, this should not be left to the normal courts; there must be special courts exclusively meant for dealing with these offences committed on them; and the government must see that a time limit should be fixed for giving judgement in those offences (LSD 25 November 1985:371).
Perspectives on Land Reforms

Landlessness is the major handicap of Dalit population and particularly SCs among whom nearly 50 percent of the households cultivate less than 0.01 hectare land each. Nearly 2/3rd of them in the rural areas are agricultural labourers and are totally dependent upon wage employment. (Mungekar 2001:9) Land to the tiller, has been the slogan of various regimes but the land ceiling has not been properly implemented according to the legislators. Though during a discussion in 1985 on the CSCTs reports, the land distribution question was raised by nine out of thirty six MPs, the deliberations reflected more dissatisfaction with implementation than asking for policy shift. But in 1994 it was the other way round, where the Members wanted change in the policy and even argued for incorporating land reforms in the 9th Schedule so that big landlords are not able to question the executing decisions in the courts. Following excerpt would clearly suggest this:

Dattarau Bandaru [Secundrabad]:

Some time ago the hon. Prime Minister has called the Chief Minister’s conference and he said that within the next two years we must verify the fact as to how much land should be distributed State-wise. But till now, no figures are available. I demand that the government should bring a Bill in Parliament to include land reforms in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. I know that during the Janata Dal Government all the parties including the BJP and the CPI (M), has all agreed to include this in the Ninth Schedule. I personally request the Home Minister to take suitable action. The caste system and the feudal system are dependent on land. If land is bifurcated and given to small beneficiaries, I feel that definitely the caste system will be eliminated (LSD 23 August 1994:624).

The persistence of the problem of landlessness has been considered the most volatile cause of atrocities. The Reports of the CSCT and the Commission also maintain that most victims of abuse are landless agricultural labourers. Lack of access to land makes Dalits economically vulnerable and their dependency is exploited by the upper and middle caste landlords and the many abuse the Dalits face go unpunished (Human Rights Watch 1999:28). Landlessness has given rise to Naxalite movements in different parts of the country as is evident from the Telangana uprisings in Andhra Pradesh and the Tebhaga movement in West Bengal. There is also an upsurge of naxalism in Bihar in the last few years.
The disenchantment with the functioning of the Ministry of Welfare in terms of Dalit policies is reflected in observations of the Members during the debates. The inability of the Ministry to take legal action against the violators of law forms the basis for this. One of the members, by name K.D. Sultanpuri went to the extent of suggesting that the department should be put under the Prime Minister’s Office, so that there is constant vigilance and monitoring of the prevailing conditions (LSD December 7, 1994:227). The demand to shift the subject of atrocities on Dalits from Welfare Ministry to Ministry of Home Affairs has been consistent and many other MPs also reiterated the proposition.

**Perspective on Job Reservations**

The issue of job reservation has been dealt in Phenomenal representation where short-term and stereotype issues were discussed. It was meant simply for increasing or fulfilling the vacancies. But legislators also wanted special attention in this regard and came out with concrete suggestions and that is why we differentiate between Phenomenal and enduring representation in job reservation because in latter alternative policy mechanisms are suggested with long-term objectives. The compensatory discrimination in government jobs has been the most controversial aspect of the policy. And it has been continuously considered the most effective measure to come out of the stemming poverty and discrimination prevalent in village life. On the other hand the critics of reservation hold the policy responsible for the dilution of standards without taking cognisance of the changes in the economy and polity in recent times (Natraj 1999:2384). It is also equally true that the class which benefits by those reservations is the socially mobile group among Dalits. During the discussion on the Commission's reports in 1985, the Members were apprehensive about the enactments of the provisions and regretted the non-implementation, as it was a meager number that was benefited due to the policy. However, the 1994 discussion shows that the legislators not only raised the issue of non-implementation but also suggested measures like going for special recruitment drive. The Members raised the issue of the punishment to those government officials found guilty of not implementing the policy. For this they demanded special attention.

The anti-reservation movement in some parts of the country developed antagonism among Dalits and their counterparts. The persons authorised to fulfill
the reserved quota did not want to appoint SC/ST candidates. A wide gap has been shown in various reports of the Welfare Ministry between the posts available and filled up with these candidates. The issue was raised during the discussion in 1994.

U.H. Patel [Bulsar]:

Mere talks or formulation of guidelines will not deliver the goods. The powers given by the Constitution to the Central government will have to be used. For this necessary orders will have to be issued. Why are the State governments or other institutions not issuing orders for filling up the reserved posts? I request the Central Government to prepare a time-bound programme for filling up the reserved posts and take up this work on war-footing (LSD 26 November 1985:315).

Simon Tigga [Khunti]:

In the end I would like to say one thing more. So far as the question of reservation for them is concerned, persons at the lower level indulge in bungling. I do not say that Government do not want to ensure reservation. Many laws have been enacted to provide reservation to them and the government desires that they get due representation in services, but government servants not implementing machinery should be held responsible and the persons found guilty should be awarded punishment. They are unable to get their reserved quota as these officers do not observe the rules. On the other hand influential persons organise agitation for abolishing the reservation system. The result is that a situation of class war is developing in our country. Government should pay special attention towards it. With these words, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to express my views in this regard (LSD 26 November 1994:289).

**Perspective on Promotions in Services**

The Mandal Commission verdict withdrew the reservations in promotions for SC/STs with prospective effect. The issue of reservations in promotions has been raised many times in the Parliament. Although statements were issued by the Minister to clear the cloud prevalent at that time. The fact is that various departments did not implement it on one pretext or the other. The issue was again raised by many Members during the debate on the Reports in 1994, and the government was asked to come out with a comprehensive Bill to take care of the interests of Dalits in services.

Jagpal Singh [Haridwar]:

The Mandal Commission case is lying pending with the Supreme Court. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not a party to it but the Apex Court gave the decision that there will be restriction on the promotions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. They were not given reservation in their promotion. This question has
been raised at least 10 times here. The hon. Minister has assured that they have not implemented this decision and reservation will be given at the time of promotion also. I may submit here that order of the Supreme Court is treated as a law unless the Parliament changes it. If the Parliament does not change the relevant rule or law, the order of the Supreme Court remains in force. Today all the departments have stopped reservation in promotion. You may keep on giving orders after orders, nothing will happen. Those orders are of the Department of Personnel and not yours. Those orders have not been executed anywhere till date. The reservation in promotion in each department has been stopped; everything is in backlog. These vacancies are not being filled. Then why the Government is keeping silence on such an order? (LSD 23 August 1994:499).

To contain the biased behaviour of the judiciary, one of the legislators, i.e., GMC. Balayogi [Amalapuram] went up to the extent of putting the reservation policy under the 9th Schedule of the Constitution (LSD 24 August 1994:503-4).

In the light of the non-fulfilment of reserved quota and the non-percolation of benefits to the poor, some of the Members raised the issue of reviewing the 'Policy of Reservation'. They wanted to know the exact position of those who got elevated due to the policy and further they wanted to develop a comprehensive strategy for their development.

Rasa Singh Rawat [Ajmer]:

What is their condition today? How much reservation and other facilities have been provided to them? Only some handful forward classes are getting benefit of it and other people are still leading their lives on pavements. They are still reeling under the same conditions. Similarly, how many Harijans have reached the high posts? There are some handful people who are getting most of these facilities and rests are still facing the situation of negligence. Is the time not ripe even after 47 years of independence to review the reservation policy of the Government? Had it been reviewed it would have become clear as to how many persons have got employment, how many posts are lying vacant and what are the reasons for not filling up these vacancies. It would have also become clear as to what extent this policy has brought about uniformity and goodwill in the society (LSD 8 December 1994:294).

Bhagwan Shankar Rawat [Agra]:

I also would like to say one more thing that it should also be reviewed whether the benefits of reservation have reached these classes or not. Except some particular groups among 1-2 castes, no other Scheduled Castes people could get benefits of this reservation policy. We have to think over the bottlenecks existed in the policy and than a new policy should be formulated so that all people
belonging to Scheduled Castes could be benefited. It is very essential and hence it should be reviewed at once, and a comprehensive strategy should be formulated for their development (LSD 8 December 1994:298).

Perspectives on Privatisation, Liberalisation and Globalisation

The privatisation and liberalisation process started by the Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1985 is considered to be most harmful for the Dalit masses as the opportunities for jobs were reduced in the government departments and the public sector undertakings.

The debate among economists and social philosophers has highlighted the limitations of the market to provide social justice. It leads to difficulties in arriving at a generally acceptable consensus and evaluate the available alternatives (Vaidyanathan 2001:1810). When market forces occupy the centre-stage of growth and development, the State’s power to intervene is reduced. The market excludes those without income as consumers or buyers due to their lack of purchasing power. The exclusion deprives them of “entitlements” (Sen 1981). Thus the weaker sections will fall shortage of entitlements with the setting in motion of the liberalisation process and the most obvious victims would be the weaker sections and the SC/STs in particular. Compensatory discrimination policy has got stereotyped around public sector reservations and privatisation which are frightening government employees, particularly Dalits who saw it to be "a heaven for employment" (Omvedt 2001).

Though the V.P. Singh regime did not expedite the liberalisation process after Rajiv Gandhi government but the P.V. Narsimha Rao regime (1991-96) accelerated the process. In such circumstances, the issue of reservations in private sector to safeguard the interests of deprived sections was addressed by Parliamentarians to sustain the development of SC/STs. Even the PCWSCT presented two reports on the subject, but the Members showed dis-satisfaction during the discussions on the inaction of the government in this regard. Even till today there is no assurance on the subject by the State. The following excerpts substantiate MPs perspectives on the liberalisation process vis-a-vis Dalits:

G.M.C. Balayogi [Amalapuram]:

As a part of the liberalisation programme, the Government is going in for privatising the public sector units and even nationalised banks. This privatisation is inflicting a death blow to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minority sections of the society. With privatisation all the
reservations available to these sections in Government Undertakings will be taken away at once. The Private companies and Undertakings are averse to the policy of reservations. Hence, the legislation to guarantee reservation in Private Sector. Thus, the Government can save SCs/STs and other minority sections from being deprived of the Reservation facility duly guaranteed by the Constitution. Hope, the Government would come forward with the necessary Bill before this House soon (LSD 24 August 1994:563).

Realising the implications of lack of reservations in private sector, the Prime Minister gave a statement to assure the house to look into the matter of safeguarding the interests of SC/STs. The following excerpt of his statement highlights only assurances not any positive course of actions:

We will certainly examine this – Measures for welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, especially with regard to the reservations in private and public and multinational corporations in view of the new economic policy this is again an extremely important-point. But right now, as the law stands, as the Constitution stands, it is not possible for me to give any commitment. All I can say, we can put our heads together and find a way to this how we can cope with this new situation in the new context (LSD 24 August 1994:541-2).

Whatever statements the government may come out with, the liberalisation process thwarts the survival of the weak. The Welfare State is getting away from the issue of the socio-economic security to the poor, particularly to Dalits. Liberalisation of economy in general and globalisation in particular is increasing the interdependence and interconnectedness of the world within a logic of an advancing modernity which signifies a risk and uncertainty that leads to vulnerability (Harriss 2001:2034).

To say that, the Dalit Question requires long–term strategies, which would involve long-term prescriptions for its solution. Though the Members did not categorically mention about how to shape a strategy, they pointed out the failures of the existing mechanism to uplift Dalit masses and suggested various measures in this regard. A long list of measures can be compiled from the suggestions made by them with both long-term, and short-term perspectives. In brief, the following suggestions broadly indicate towards the perspectives adopted.

Suggestions by the MPs During Discussion on the Reports
1985 Discussion
Atrocities
- Exclusive courts to tackle Dalit cases
- Special police force to combat the atrocities
- Allotment of land with mutual consent to avoid atrocities
- Punish encroachment in tribal areas
- Implement minimum wage law strictly to stop atrocities

**Service Sector**
- Representation of Dalits in Interview Boards
- Filling up of reserved vacancies in Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Undertakings
- Efforts to be made at the Central and the State level to fill up the vacancies
- To appoint eligible Class IV employees in Class III to fulfill the quota
- Recruiting Dalits in Army
- Special training for promotions
- Punishment to those, not fulfilling the reserved quota
- Pre-training to absorb the eligible candidates in case of non-suitability
- Tackle the adverse remarks in CRs

**Education**
- More stipends to the Dalit students
- Dalit students in merit list not to be included in the reserved category list
- Food for education programme to attract children
- Construction of hostels at District and Block level
- Making sure that the scholarship reaches to the students in time
- To tackle separately Dalit education question in the new education policy
- Hostels for Tribal girls
- Education for awareness
- More *Ashram* schools in Tribal areas
- Making education not only free but compulsory also
- Increasing the number of scholarships with revision
- Special programmes to increase the literacy rate of Dalits
- Mid-day meal and mother-tongue education to Tribal children
- Mental development in terms of confidence building.
Land Reforms
- Amending the law on land
- Updating the land-records
- Allotment of land with mutual consensus
- Expedite the land reforms
- Check the slipping of Dalit land to non-Dalits
- Land reform to Check atrocities
- Land reforms implementation with Police protection
- Not only allotting land but also giving possession.
- To provide impediments to make Dalits real land-owners
- Tackling the middle-man concept in tribal areas
- Avoid double entry of land in tribal areas – both in Revenue record and in forest land
- First rehabilitation of Tribals then acquisition of land
- Distribution of land in Government's possession

Housing
- Abolish the concept of separate houses away from village community
- To provide good material for Dalit Houses schemes
- Pucca houses for slum clearance
- Habitation of Dalits only at District and Taluqa level

Miscellaneous
- Flush system for scavengers
- Rehabilitation of scavengers
- Special arrangements for water and electricity
- Making SC/ST Development Corporations more efficient
- Judiciary not to intervene in the fixing up of quota
- Legal cells at different levels
- Recruiting sincere and dedicated officers in Tribal areas and concerned departments
- Streamline the administration for proper implementation of Schemes
1994 Discussion

**Atrocities**
- Exploitations of Tribals shifted from money-lender to the government officials
- Appointment of Dalit judges in special courts
- Residential schools for SC/STs
- Rehabilitation of Tribals before starting a project
- To start mobile special courts
- Implementation of land ceiling act
- Violation of human rights by not allowing conversion should be stopped
- Commission not to depend on SP/DMs for reports
- Constitution *Bhumí Sena* to give possession of land
- Legal action against public servants who violate laws on Dalits
- No repetition of Nagpur stampede kind of incidents
- Stop illegal possession of land
- Officers to be made responsible for atrocities

**Education**
- Residential schools in SC/ST areas
- Mid-day meal scheme
- Scholarship to be sufficient and in time
- Hostel for SC/ST students, specially tribal girls
- Developing mechanism against drop-out of Dalit students
- No diversion of funds for SC/ST education
- More Ashram schools
- Provide adequate staff in school in SC/ST areas
- Scholarships according to price index
- More educational institutions
- Encouragement among SC/ST students for higher education
- Training Institution for Dalits
- Opening of SC/ST hostels in each district
- Quality education to eradicate untouchability

**Service Sector**
- Special recruitment centres in Tribal areas
- SC/STs in interview Boards
- Special coaching for students to get into service
- Punishing the guilty officers
- Filling up backlog
- Providing jobs to educated youth
- Reservation to be put under 9th Schedule
- District-wise reservation to tribals in TSP areas

**Miscellaneous**
- Co-operatives in Tribal Areas
- Five-times enhancement of the budget on Dalits
- Sanction of loan to be made simple
- Development of industrial infrastructure for unemployed youth
- Small scale industries and sheds to Dalits
- Providing feedback to handloom sector
- Monitoring of loans under SCDFC and banks
- Commission should not depend on SP/DMs
- New commission to bring in Castes/Tribes in the list
- Commission to consult the States
- Discussion on parliamentary committee to be made compulsory
- Proportional representation to Dalits in industries
- More powers to the Ministry of Welfare
- Time-bound programme to implement the recommendation contained in the reports of the CSCT
- Master-plan for mobilisation of irrigation resources
- Need to abolish casteism
- Electrification of Ambedkar grams
- Provide assistance for proper house construction

**Summing Up**
Deliberations by the legislators reveal that there was a phenomenal as well as an enduring representation. Their articulations for increasing, (i) the funds for welfare activities, (ii) vacancies in various departments and fulfilling them, (iii) scholarships for students, etc., were relatively low because seventeen out of seventy-three
legislators intervened on these aspects. Interestingly, a majority of them belonged to reserved constituencies. Another significant aspect of the deliberations was that in 1985 if the concerns were for raising scholarships, funds and reserved vacancies, in 1994 it was against the delay in scholarship* and non-fulfillment of existing reserved vacancies. It is surprising to note that constituency concerns even with regard to short-term objectives were ambiguously absent. Neither did the legislators bother about lack of funds for developmental activities concerning Dalits in their constituencies, nor did they raise the issue of atrocities in their areas.**

Legislative deliberations appear to be more concerned with enduring representation. Though some of the members' articulations exhibited phenomenal representation but most of them gave equal treatment to long-term policy objectives as well. Before the conferment of constitutional status to the Commission they kept raising this issue during the 1985 discussion. The constitutional status of 1990 also did not altogether satisfy them as they wanted the wide ranging powers bestowed upon the Commission to be strengthened with adequate budget and staff to oversee its functioning. Another aspect for the proper implementation of safeguards was related to the constitution of a separate ministry for SC/STs or to bring Dalit subject under the MHA. With regard to containing atrocities against Dalits, the legislators were not happy with the PCRA. They wanted (i) a more stringent act to punish the guilty, (ii) establishment of more special courts and, (iii) appointment of Dalit personnel in atrocity-prone areas etc. Another concern of the MPs was to make laws on land reforms more severe for proper distribution of land to the landless Dalits.

So far as compensatory discrimination is concerned, they argued for a Special Recruitment Drive to fulfill the backlog. In 1992, the Mandal Commission judgement on the withdrawal of SC/ST reservations in promotions attracted the attention of the parliamentarians and they took up the matter during the 1994 discussion on the Reports. The MPs seem to have been aware of adverse impact of the liberalisation process and asked the government to come out with the necessary Bill to safeguard the Dalit interests.

* There was a revision of scholarships in 1989 by the central government.

** Though participants were from atrocity-prone areas like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh etc., for which these reports provided sufficient data and evidences.
One major policy question on the constitution of a commission to report on the administration of the Schedule Areas and the welfare of STs under Article 339, was missing during the debates both in 1985 and 1994. Though some questions on education (particularly for Scholarships) were asked, the issues of providing the SC/STs with better educational facilities and make them self-reliant was not addressed adequately during the debates.

While replying to both the Motions, the Government seems to have been able to satisfy the Members in following a coherent policy towards the Dalit problem. In the 1985 reply to a Motion, the Minister of Welfare, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai convinced the Members with regard to the existence of Review committees at the State, District and Taluqa level for the welfare of these groups. She mentioned that now the family was being taken as a unit in the Tribal Sub-Plan instead of the area. The lack of prosecution of offenders due to absence of evidences (even though the PCRA was stringent enough to punish the guilty) was accepted by her. She admitted that "everything is not fine and everything is not right at every level but the responsibility lies on the State governments as the policies are basically implemented by them." She however "assured to look into that the guidelines of the Central government are followed" (LSD 28 November 1985:261-269). It is rightly pointed out that public accountability remains a serious problem for ensuring proper choice of beneficiaries and proper use of funds. In spite of availability of information there are no proper and efficient institutional mechanisms for making complaints or seeking redressal of grievances (Vaidyanathan 2001:1819).

On the other hand the Minister of State for Welfare, Giridhar Gomango told the Members that the Ministry of Welfare was already working as a nodal agency so that polices are implemented. He mentioned that the allocation of Business Rules 1961 have been amended in 1982 and accordingly:

The Ministry of Welfare will be nodal ministry of overall policy, planning and co-ordination for programmes of development for SC/STs with regard to sectoral programmes and schemes of development for these communities. Policy-making, planning, monitoring evaluation etc. also will be the responsibility of this Ministry and co-ordinate with not only concerned central Ministries, but also with State Governments and Union Territories (LSD 28 November 1985: 334-336).

None of the two Ministers replied satisfactorily to the question of constitutional status to the NCSCT. It was merely reiterated that the matter would be
looked into. On the special recruitment drive it was said that it was the responsibility of the Department of Personnel and Training.

The Members alleged that the Ministry of Welfare does not have any power to look into the law and order problem, handicapped as it is, in taking action against the errant persons. This issue was ignored by the Ministers. Hence the question had to be shifted to the MHA. But the Government ignored the issue of shifting the SC/ST question from the Ministry of Welfare to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

One issue raised by majority of the MPs was related to the question of hardening punishment to the officers responsible for non-implementation of policies. The ministers neither stated what is being done nor promised to come out with measures or a policies to check the conduct of the officials vis-à-vis Dalits. The responsibility was put on the state governments as "the task of implementation of policies was theirs not of the central government". It was stated by the Minister that the most the central government could do was to send orders to the state governments if specific cases of policy violations arise.

Replying to the Motion on the reports in 1994, the Minister of State for Welfare, K.V. Thangabalu, who basically provided the facts and figures in the form of the funds allocated in various sectors for the upliftment of SC/STs. For instance, the allocation of Rs. 6 crores for implementing PAA to the states. The Union Territories were provided with Rs. 2600 crores for SCP and Rs. 2629 for TSP and Rs. 492.07 crores were sanctioned to the National SC/ST Finance Development Corporations, etc. Apart from this, he mentioned about the programmes and schemes being implemented to commemorate the Ambedkar Centenary such as Ambedkar Chairs in Universities, the Ambedkar Award, allocation of Rs. four crores for a film on Ambedkar to be made by the National Film Development Corporation, the translation of writings and speeches in various languages, etc. (LSD 9 December 1994:226-42). But he was unable to provide figures for those erring officials who were responsible for the non-fulfilment of backlogs. The Minister was also was unable to convince the Members on the lowering of funds to the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis from 5000 crores to 500 crores.

Regarding atrocities, he came out with figures which showed the scale declining from 3500 to 3000. He stated to have identified foury-eight atrocity-prone areas. However, he made no mention of such regions or even the states where the magnitude is higher. Time and again the issue of law and order being the State
subject emerged and the Minister rendered the responsibility on the states for non-
implementation of programmes. Mention was also made for having written to Chief
Minister and to the latter's response in terms of the instructions given to the District
Magistrates and Superintendents of Police for checking atrocities.

The Minister shared the concern on the scholarship revision and allocation of
more grants for this, reservation in promotions, and assured to look into these
matters. These were narrow concerns and only implementational aspects of the
reservation policy that attracted the attention of the Minister.

However, major policy issues like need for legislation to ensure promotions,
policy of representation in private sectors, promotions of scavengers to group 'D'
services providing share to tribals in newly created assets, reviewing the ongoing
projects in tribal areas, constitution of a commission to report on the administration
of Scheduled Areas, and welfare of STs in the States, these all escaped the attention
of the Minister. Even though some Members reminded him of these issues but he
chose to ignore these, as he reeled out statistics and ignored the policy aspects.

The Government in 1985 was unable to satisfy the MPs and a member, R.P.
Suman, who raised the issue of punishment to erring officers (who failed to
implement the policies meant for upliftment of SC/STs), wanted some assurance, as
no state government was paying heed to orders and guidelines issued by the central
government. He went on to blame that it was happening only with regard to Dalits.

Ramvilas Paswan, Bhogendra Jha, Ram Nihori Rao and Nitish Kumar in
1994 intervened during the proceedings regarding the issues of punishment to
officials, land not being in possession of Dalits, funds being misused, and use of
welfare hostels for non-official purposes, respectively. Coming to the rescue of the
Minister, the Deputy Speaker remarked that he has understood the question and that
the Members should rely on the assurances given by him. The House was finally
adjourned till the next working day.

The discussion on the Reports shows that Dalit policies were indeed
deliberated upon by the Lok Sabha. And the legislators' emphasis was more on
policy aspects i.e. on enduring representation. The enduring representation was more
towards strengthening the mechanism of policy implementation than pursuing
representation of Dalits in 'untouched areas' such as private sectors, Supreme Court
and High Courts, etc. At the same time stray demands were made for such
provisions but not pursued in the reply of the Ministers.
The Government's overall response remained wanting with regard to the
demands of the Dalits. Data was provided on various aspects of present Dalit
policies and demands on 'untouched areas' were usually ignored. Even if assurance
was given, no time-bound programmes to materialise the assurances was announced.
As far as reservations in central services was concerned, other ministeries were
roped in to say that it did not come within the purview of Ministry of Welfare. When
the legislators reminded them of its role of co-ordination regarding safeguarding the
Dalit interests, the ministers responded with "orders in specific matters can be
issued' or 'the matter will be looked into."

In 1994, interventions on the reply of the Minister were greater as compared
to 1985. It shows that the Dalit issue had become quite provocative in the post-
Mandal period.

Though, the MPs may not have been able to change the policy perceptions
of the Government during the debates on the Reports, several policy issues, whether
to alter the implementation strategies or to demand new policies or at least to make
the government realise the need for policy change with regard to Dalits was put
forward by the MPs.